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# Understanding the public experience of archaeology in the UK and Italy: a call for a 'sociological movement' in Public Archaeology

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Despite the continuing growth of Public Archaeology as a field of studies, the composition and behaviour of the 'public' for archaeology are still heavily under-investigated. This paper addresses the neglected area of archaeological audiences and offers insights into the public's experience of archaeology in the UK and Italy, focussing on museums and television and using a primarily quantitative and case study-based approach. Conclusions provide evidence and suggest aims, theory and methods for the start of a 'sociological movement' in Public Archaeology.

**Keywords:** Italy, UK, public archaeology, public attitudes and behaviour, social research methods, media experiences of archaeology, learning, archaeological communication

*Nonostante il crescente sviluppo del settore della Public Archaeology a livello internazionale, la composizione e il comportamento dei 'pubblici' dell'archeologia sono stati scarsamente studiati e rimangono, ad oggi, poco conosciuti. Questo articolo affronta il tema del 'pubblico' in archeologia nel Regno Unito e in Italia, a partire dall'analisi prevalentemente quantitativa di casi studio di comunicazione museale e televisiva. Il contributo propone obiettivi e linee di teoria e metodo per una Archeologia Pubblica di orientamento sociologico.*

**Parole chiave:** Italia, UK, archeologia pubblica, composizione e comportamento del pubblico, metodologie di ricerca sociale, media, apprendimento, comunicazione archeologica

## 1. Introduction

In their professional practice, archaeologists often interact with 'the public' in several different ways. However, for them, archaeological audiences are still to a large extent unknown quantities, and the public's experience of archaeology remains a fairly unexplored territory. So far, literature dealing with non-academic communication in archaeology has concentrated mostly on the analysis of the content. A large number of

studies have considered the contemporary representation of archaeology in a diverse range of media, from the TV screen (e.g. Schadla-Hall, Morris 2003), to the press (e.g. Ascherson 2004) and films (e.g. Hall 2004, 2009). Particular attention has been dedicated to 'pseudo-scientific' presentations, and the extent to which they should be tolerated or opposed (e.g. Gale 2002; Russell 2002; Schadla-Hall 2004; Holtorf 2005; Fagan 2006; Fagan, Feder 2006).

A second strand of research has explored theoretical and methodological matters, such as the benefits generated by popular communication in archaeology (e.g. McManamon 1991, 2000a, 2000b; Lawson 1999; McAdam 1999; Christensen 2000; Holtorf 2000; Finn 2001; Gardner 2007; Harding 2007; Levy 2007), public engagement strategies (Holtorf 2007a, 2007b), or communication and interpretation on archaeological sites and in museum spaces (e.g. Pearce 1990, 1992, 1994; Copeland 2004; Merriman 2004b; Swain 2007). More recently, discussions have centred on the opportunities offered by digital communication, open access and open data (e.g. Bevan 2012; Hole 2012; Lake 2012).

Works examining the composition and behaviour of archaeological audiences are instead in the minority. Amongst these, the only two studies that have been conducted, in the UK, with the aim of identifying trends valid at national scale are Merriman's survey (1991) on the consumption of museums presenting the past and archaeology, and Piccini and Henson's analysis (2006) of heritage (including archaeology) television viewers. Other reports looking to characterise public engagement with archaeology through quantitative approaches come from overseas, but, despite providing potentially interesting data, they remain largely descriptive in nature (see, for example, Pokotylo, Guppy 1999; Ramos, Duganne 2000). Research is needed that revisits and extends previous work on the 'publics' for archaeology. This necessity has become even more pressing after recent innovations that have been reshaping the media environment as a consequence of the more common use of digital technologies (see Bonacchi 2012a: xv-xvii for a discussion on the "ecological view of media change and digital communication").

This paper addresses the neglected area of archaeological audiences, and offers insights into the public's experience of archaeology in the UK and Italy, focussing on museums and television. By concentrating on these two 'older' mass media<sup>1</sup>, it will be possible to make comparisons with relevant research conducted in the past (Merriman 1991; Piccini, Henson 2006) and track change through time. A prevalently quantitative method-

<sup>1</sup> For an explanation of the reasons why museums can be called "mass media of the long term", see MERRIMAN 2004b, p. 85.

ology was used to analyse three case studies: a first of visitors to an archaeological museum gallery in the UK; a second of viewers of the longest running archaeology-themed television series broadcast in Great Britain; and a third comparative case study of visitors to an archaeological exhibition in Italy. Each case study was investigated through a sample of between 423 and 500 respondents (see the *Methodology* section for details on the composition of the samples). This approach allowed the identification of trends on media use for accessing archaeology in the UK compared to Italy, and of the types of experiences of archaeology that are facilitated by TV viewing and museum visitation. The focus of the paper is on Great Britain and the Italian case has been useful mainly to highlight the specificities of UK audiences' interaction with archaeology. Before introducing the research methodology in greater detail, the next section will explain the relevance of this study to the field of Public Archaeology.

## **2. Towards a 'sociological movement' in Public Archaeology**

Public Archaeology is a nascent area of studies which gained larger currency and academic credibility in the 1990s, more than twenty years after the first appearance of the term in McGimsey's volume (1972). Through Peter Ucko's work at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, it came to be increasingly understood as an area of research rather than practice only (e.g. McDavid 2002; Matsuda 2004; Schadla-Hall 2006; Moshenska 2009), and a British school of Public Archaeology formed. Various commentators (e.g. Jameson 2004; Merriam 2004a; Schadla-Hall 2006) have underlined how the Northern American school has aligned Public Archaeology mainly with education and cultural resource management, whilst the British one has defined it more widely as concerned with the interaction between archaeology and the public (Schadla-Hall 1999). In the last ten years, however, this sharp separation has started to fade, and the British interpretation of Public Archaeology has been progressively adopted in a number of countries worldwide, and in Europe especially (e.g. Pluckhahn 2007; Bonacchi 2009, 2011; Vannini 2011). Despite there being a broadly common view of Public Archaeology, however, there is still no unity on the future direction, theories and methodological tools that make up its disciplinary matrix (Matsuda, Okamura 2011)<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> This fragmentation of theoretical and methodological approaches within the field of Public Archaeology strongly emerged also from the round table session *Public archaeology from the ground up*, which was organised in 2013 as part of the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the European Archaeologists Association.



The field of Public Archaeology claims to be interested in addressing issues at the interface between archaeology and the public, but, until now, research has primarily taken either a philosophical or historical approach (Bonacchi 2012a). Very few works have actually investigated the social, cultural and economic role that archaeology plays in contemporary society with studies of national relevance able to guide policy and practice. Time has come for a change in the research agenda. Building on the meaningful work in this area cited above, this article leads to suggested aims and methods for the start of a 'sociological movement' in Public Archaeology.

### 3. Theoretical framework

In this paper, media are defined as facilitators of social subjects' experiences of the world (Eugení 2009, p. 2). Archaeology is instead understood as the discipline that aims to answer historical questions through the stratigraphical analysis of material deposits, as the historical interpretations produced and the material evidence on which they are based. With these definitions and concepts in mind, the analysis presented here on the public's experience of archaeology through different media works on two levels.

Firstly, the social organisation of archaeological experiences; this is the way in which the kind of media used to access archaeology is related to users' social dimensions, especially (in the context of this research) age, gender and education. The term "social organisation" (Bennett *et al.* 2009) is borrowed from cultural sociology, an area that has been recently re-examining how the construct of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986) applies in present day Britain. Particularly, a number of studies have mapped the cultural tastes and participation of the UK population (e.g. Bennett, Silva 2006; Gayo-Cal, Savage, Warde 2006; Bennett *et al.* 2009), although none has specifically considered public participation in archaeology.

Secondly, the analysis of the personal experiences of archaeology facilitated by television compared to those enabled by museums provides a greater understanding of the value of TV and museum communication in archaeology today. In accordance with Falk and Dierking's model of the museum experience (Falk, Dierking 1992, 2000) which is extendable to other media experiences as well (see the discussion in Bonacchi 2012b, Chapter 3), television and museum experiences of archaeology are understood as the result of the interaction of three spheres through

time<sup>3</sup>: the personal sphere of the individual (including socio-demographic characteristics, personal interests, motivations, previous knowledge and experience), the social context (whether the experience takes place when the individual is alone or with a group of people and the kind of group), and the physical space in which the experience occurs.

To characterise the types of experiences that are configured through this interaction, the four categories of 'excitement', 'playfulness', 'contemplation' and 'learning' were used. These had been identified by the museum marketing experts Kotler and Kotler (1998) to describe the range of experiences that museums can offer, but they are applicable to television as well. Further insights into the nature of learning experiences facilitated by television archaeology in particular were investigated using Hooper-Greenhill's Generic Learning Outcomes framework (Hooper-Greenhill 2002). The latter encompasses five learning outcomes, through which it is possible to measure and understand how people learn in free-choice learning environments (Hooper-Greenhill 2002). Such outcomes pertain, respectively, to: knowledge and understanding; skills; values, attitudes and feelings; behaviour; creativity, inspiration and enjoyment (Hooper-Greenhill 2002). The Generic Learning Outcomes framework is based on the same constructivist education theory that constitutes the foundation for Falk and Dierking's models of the museum experience (1992, 2000) and thus it can be consistently used in this article. Constructivism is driven by the principles that "learners construct knowledge for themselves - each learner individually (and socially) constructs meaning - as he or she learns", and that the construction of meaning is learning (Hein 1991). Such education theory is the result of a theory of learning as active process of "selection and organization of relevant data from cultural experience" and of an epistemology that does not conceive knowledge as a body absolute in itself, but as the outcome of subjective interpretation (Hein 1991; Hooper-Greenhill 1997, p. 1).

#### **4. Methodology**

In order to study the social organisation of the public's experience of archaeology in the UK compared to Italy, as well as the value of museum and TV experiences of archaeology for current audiences, a preva-

<sup>3</sup> Here, it will be studied how respondents in the three samples had configured their experiences of archaeological communication at the time of answering the surveys through which they were questioned.



Fig. 1. The medieval gallery of the Museum of London.

lently quantitative, but case study based methodology was chosen. The quantitative analysis, via frequency distributions, cross-tabulations and chi-squared tests, allowed the identification of general trends that can be considered as having elements of validity at national scale level. A case study-centred approach was instead key for a typological investigation of the ways in which specific experiences of archaeological communication were configured.

Three case studies were used: a first composed of visitors to a UK archaeological museum gallery (the medieval gallery of the Museum of London - MoL) (fig. 1); a second one of viewers of an archaeology-themed television series broadcast in Great Britain (*Time Team* - TT); and the third is a comparative case of visitors to an exhibition about medieval archaeology organised in Italy (*From Petra to Shawbak. Archaeology of a Frontier* - FPtS; Palazzo Pitti, Florence, 2009) (fig. 2). The medieval gallery of the Museum of London and *From Petra to Shawbak* were chosen for their international audiences, and because of their comparability in terms of subject presented (they focus on medieval archaeology), kind of exhibits and overall interpretation strategy (Bonacchi 2012b). Both were designed in a way that potentially enabled all of the experience types described by Kotler and Kotler (1998). *Time Team* was examined due to its national and international significance, having been broadcast

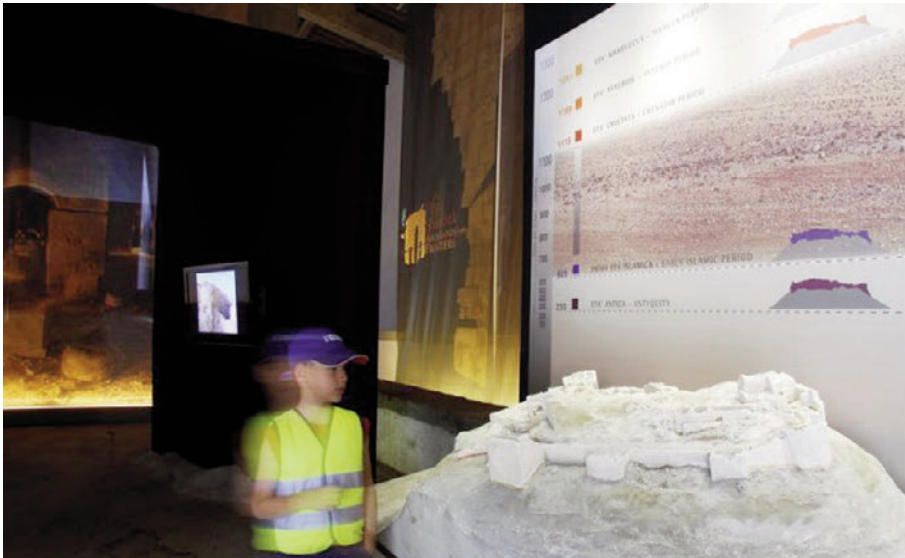


Fig. 2. The exhibition *From Petra to Shawbak. Archaeology of a Frontier* © Anna Marx.

on Channel 4 since 1994 (Taylor 1998, pp. 8-15) and exported to over thirty-six countries (Channel 4 Press 2012). Every episode of the series shows a three-day long excavation of an archaeological site in Great Britain, conducted by a team of experts comprising both regular and occasional contributors (Bonacchi 2013).

Each case study was investigated through a sample of between 423 (for *TT*) and 500 (for both MoL and *FPTs*) respondents aged 18 and over, who participated in questionnaire-based surveys between October 2009 and April 2011<sup>4</sup>. Samples of visitors were drawn randomly and questioned via face-to-face interviews as they were leaving the gallery and exhibition spaces<sup>5</sup>. Given the impossibility of selecting *Time Team* viewers randomly, these were instead self-recruited and took part in an online survey publicised on the *Time Team* Facebook page that had the

<sup>4</sup> At the medieval gallery of the Museum of London, the survey took place during the months of June, July and August 2010, on days that were agreed with the marketing department of the museum, but attempting to cover all days of the week in similar numbers throughout the period; interviews were carried out between 11am and 4 pm. At *From Petra to Shawbak*, the research had an overall duration of three weeks (from 19 September to 10 October 2009), and interviews were conducted daily, from 9am to 5.30pm, by five interviewers taking shifts.

<sup>5</sup> Every first visitor crossing a specific line on the floor, in proximity to the exhibition and gallery exits, was stopped.

highest number of fans at the time of the study (over 5,000)<sup>6</sup>. This method was chosen also because it allowed questioning people who were discussing *Time Team* episodes on a weekly basis and who could therefore comment on a recent viewing experience they had had (73% of the *TT* sample had watched a *TT* episode no more than a week before the survey). This aspect made the *TT* sample comparable with those of MoL and *FPTs* respondents, who were questioned about their museum experiences of archaeology as soon as their visit was over. However, recruiting from an online fan community might have introduced a bias towards a more widespread use of online platforms to access archaeology, which is accounted for in the interpretation of the results (see *The social organisation of archaeological experiences* section). Each sample was composed of roughly half of respondents (54% for MoL; 54% for *FPTs*, 60% for *TT*) living in the country where the gallery or exhibition was located (the UK and Italy respectively), or the TV series was produced and aired (the UK), whilst the rest resided elsewhere.

Of the information that was collected through the surveys, three sets of data are used to answer the questions posed in this paper<sup>7</sup>. The first set consists of respondents' socio-demographic characteristics: gender, age<sup>8</sup>, highest level of education attained<sup>9</sup> and origin<sup>10</sup>. A second set of data concerns ways of accessing archaeology. People in the samples indicated how they habitually accessed archaeology by choosing one or more of the following closed options: 'visiting museums or exhibitions', 'watching television programmes', 'through online platforms', 'reading

<sup>6</sup> The page may be accessed at: [www.facebook.com/pages/TimeTeam/10174003972?fref=ts](https://www.facebook.com/pages/TimeTeam/10174003972?fref=ts).

<sup>7</sup> The whole dataset is used in the author's PhD thesis, *Communicating Archaeology: From Trend to Policy. Public Perceptions and Experience in the Changing Media Environment* (BONACCHI 2012b).

<sup>8</sup> Respondents were asked about their age via an open question and age groups were derived subsequently.

<sup>9</sup> Respondents from the MoL case study were given the possibility of answering one of the following: 'O level/GCSE'; 'A levels'; 'university degree'; 'post-graduate degree'. This choice set was particularly suited for respondents who had grown up in the UK and who were expected to be about half of the total sample; as the survey was conducted through face-to-face interviews, clarifications were offered to international respondents who were not familiar with the classification. The answer options given to visitors to the exhibition *From Petra to Shawbak* were instead: 'elementary'; 'middle school' (lower secondary); 'high school' (upper secondary); 'university or post-graduate degree'. Such categories are comparable with those used for the UK museum case study, although they are not perfectly matching because the Italian education system is different. For the *Time Team* survey, a great majority of English speaking respondents was expected; nevertheless, it was chosen not to use the more UK-specific answer options of the MoL case study because, as the survey was conducted online, there would have been no chances of offering clarifications to the respondents who were not familiar with the UK formal education system. The answer options used for the *TT* sample were thus more general: 'primary'; 'lower secondary'; 'upper secondary'; 'professional qualification or other diploma'; 'university degree'; 'university post-graduate diploma/degree'.

<sup>10</sup> Respondents were asked about the 'country' and 'city/place' where they lived via an open question.



newspapers or magazines', 'visiting archaeological sites', 'listening to the radio', 'attending courses or lectures', 'reading specialised magazines or handbooks', 'participating in excavations', 'other'<sup>11</sup>. In the two UK case studies, respondents were also asked about the frequency with which they had viewed archaeological TV programmes in the previous year; they could answer: 'never', 'from 1 to 2 times', 'from 3 to 5 times', 'more than 5 times'. Applying the classification developed by Black (2005) for museum visitors, each of those options corresponded, respectively, to: 'non-viewers', 'casual viewers', 'repeat viewers', and 'regular viewers' of archaeological TV programmes. Furthermore, in the Medieval London Gallery and *Time Team* cases, the consumption of archaeological television was compared to the consumption of television in general. Through an open question<sup>12</sup>, respondents were asked how many hours of television they watched every day on average, and they were classified as 'average', 'light' or 'heavy viewers', depending on whether the figure they had provided was equal to, below or above the average of four hours calculated by Ofcom (2011) for the whole of the UK population. The frequency of both museum visitation and archaeological museum visitation was also assessed using the categorisation proposed by Black (2005) and referring to the number of museums and exhibitions in general and of archaeological ones in particular that had been visited by respondents in the twelve months prior to the study: 'non visitors' (no museum or exhibitions had been visited), 'casual visitors' (one or two museums or exhibitions visited), 'repeat visitors' (three to five museums or exhibitions visited), 'regular visitors' (more than five museums or exhibitions visited).

The third set of data regards the types of experiences of archaeology configured after visiting *From Petra to Shawbak* or the medieval gallery of the Museum of London and after watching the last episode of *Time Team* that had been seen. Respondents were asked to describe what those experiences had meant to them amongst a number of set options listed in table 1. These meanings were categorised into four experience types ('excitement', 'playfulness', 'contemplation' and 'learning') following the classification developed by Kotler and Kotler (1998), which was however adjusted to suit the analysis of both museum and television experiences. Kotler and Kotler's original classification was adapted by including only the categories of experience meanings that seemed more relevant to the types of museum spaces under consideration, and fur-

<sup>11</sup> It was specified in the questionnaires that all the options different from 'through online platforms' referred to offline forms of engagement.

<sup>12</sup> The question was: "How many hours of television do you watch every day on average?"

Experience Types	Excitement	Playfulness	Contemplation	Learning
<b>Experience meanings for the MoL/<i>FPtS</i> samples</b>	Adventure/ travelling through space and time  Immersive ex- perience	Diversión  Sociability/ time for family and friends  Having fun/gaming/ playing	Aesthetic pleasure  Occasion for reflection	Learning opportunity/ curiosity discovery
<b>Experience meanings for the <i>TT</i> sample</b>	Adventure/ travelling through space and time  Immersive ex- perience	Diversión  Sociability/ time for family and friends  Being like a detective	Aesthetic pleasure	Gaining or consolidation of knowledge  Change or development of attitudes and values  Acquisition of skills

Tab. 1. Experience meanings grouped into experience types, based on the revised version of the classification by Kotler and Kotler (1998, p. 139).

ther minor modifications were made for the case study of *TT* experiences (see Bonacchi 2013, pp. 120-121 for an explanation of the rationale behind the revision of the classification to suit the *TT* case study). Following from this analysis, respondents in the *TT* sample were also asked to explain what they felt they had learned from the last *Time Team* episode they had watched. Their free-text replies were coded and studied using the Generic Learning Outcomes framework (Hooper-Greenhill 2002, see the *Theoretical Framework* section above and Bonacchi 2013).

Finally, with respect to the analysis of data, it should be noted that frequency distributions were calculated based on the number of valid responses given either by respondents in the total samples, or by those in the sub-samples of people living in the UK or (in the case of *FPtS*) Italy. Unless otherwise indicated, the base for frequency distributions coincides with the size of the total samples ( $N = \text{samples size} = 423$  for *TT*;  $N = 500$  for MoL and *FPtS*), and percentages are rounded to the nearest 1%. Statistically significant relationships were identified through cross-tabulations and chi-squared tests.

## 5. The social organisation of archaeological experiences

This section discusses the use of media for accessing archaeology in the UK compared to Italy. The analysis showed in table 2 highlights that UK residents in both the MoL and *TT* samples experience archaeology primarily through museum visitation and television viewing, followed by online platforms. Although the reported percentages are not directly representative of the whole of the UK population, they are indicative of a general trend at national scale level, especially when compared to figures from the *FpTS* case study<sup>13</sup>. Data also importantly proves that audi-

Accessing archaeology by ...	Valid Percent UK residents MoL sample N = 266	Valid Percent UK residents <i>TT</i> sample N = 251	Valid Percent Italian residents <i>FpTS</i> sample N = 266
Visiting museums or exhibitions	89%	86%	71%
Watching television programmes	75%	98%	37%
Through online platforms	44%	67%	20%
Reading newspapers or magazines	43%	41%	40%
Visiting archaeological sites	26%	48%	49%
Listening to the radio	20%	18%	3%
Attending courses or lectures	10%	17%	11%
Reading specialised magazines or handbooks	11%	29.5%	22%
Participating in excavations	4%	10%	8%
Other	11%	5%	1%

Tab. 2. Frequency table showing the use of media for accessing archaeology, by respondents living in the UK in the MoL and *TT* samples, and by those living in Italy in the *FpTS* sample. The three most frequently reported ways of accessing archaeology, in each of the three sub-samples, are highlighted.

<sup>13</sup> The use of media for accessing archaeology in the sub-samples of MoL and *TT* respondents living in the UK is rather consistent, and the percentages that differ the most in the two groups can be most probably explained in the light of the self-selection bias in the *TT* sample. As anticipated in the *Methodology* section, being self-recruited via Facebook, the group of *TT* respondents is likely to be composed of a higher number of people who use online platforms than the average UK population. Furthermore, since these respondents belong to a fan community, it can be reasonably assumed that they tend to have a higher interest in archaeology than what the average level of interest for all *TT* viewers would be, were it be possible to calculate it. Given that there is a statistically significant relationship between higher levels of interest in archaeology and the practice of visiting archaeological sites (BONACCHI 2012b), it is then not surprising that the number of people saying that they habitually access archaeology via site visitation (or reading specialized magazines and handbooks) is greater in the *TT* sample than in the MoL sample.

ences of archaeological museums and archaeological television overlap to a substantial extent, in the UK, differently from what had been previously suggested by Piccini and Henson (2006) in their analysis of heritage television viewing.

The less common use of online resources, compared to in person visitation of museums and offline television viewing, in the UK, suggests that digital novelties are probably having a much slower impact on public participation (at least for people aged 18 and over) than one could be inclined to imagine. This seems in line with what some commentators in the media and communication field have argued regarding the fact that technological inventions are often faster than transformations in society and in the relationship between society and technology (e.g. Livingstone 2003, p. 4).

On the whole, the habitual engagement practices of people living in Italy (in the *FPTs* sample) appear to be markedly different from those of UK residents (in the *MoL* and *TT* samples), and more oriented towards museum and site visitation. Television and, generally, online platforms are less significant in facilitating participation for Italian residents in the *FPTs* group. On the one hand, these results demonstrate the shared importance of museums to enable access, whilst on the other they underline the unique success of archaeological television in the UK compared to Italy. This might also be related to the different TV archaeology offering in the two countries at the time of the study, when the most popular UK series about archaeology was the team- and action-driven *Time Team* (Bonacchi 2013), whereas in Italy archaeology appeared on TV in more traditional magazine-style formats.

Although, in the UK, museums and television are the media that are used more widely for accessing archaeology, their frequency of use is dissimilar. In the *MoL* sub-sample of UK residents, the great majority (86%) of repeat museum visitors are only casual archaeological museum visitors, and 54% of regular museum visitors are just repeat archaeological museum visitors (tab. 3). On the contrary, whereas UK residents in the *MoL* sample are for the most part (89% of them) light viewers of television in general, a numerous group of them watch television programmes about archaeology regularly (39% had watched more than five in the previous twelve months) (tab. 4-5). This suggests that currently, in the UK, television programmes are the most frequently utilised medium for accessing archaeology even among people who visit museums regularly.

Further, the dimensions of gender, age and education are differently associated with the media used to access archaeology, meaning that the social organisation of archaeological experiences changes depending on

UK RESIDENTS IN THE MoL SAMPLE					
Type of archaeological museum visitor (TAMV)		Type of museum visitor (TMV)			Total
		Casual	Repeat	Regular	
Casual	Count	42	74	26	142
	Expected Count	25.2	51.5	65.3	142.0
	% within TAMV	29.6%	52.1%	18.3%	100.0%
	% within TMV	100.0%	86.0%	23.9%	59.9%
	% of Total	17.7%	31.2%	11.0%	59.9%
Repeat	Count	0	12	59	71
	Expected Count	12.6	25.8	32.7	71.0
	% within TAMV	.0%	16.9%	83.1%	100.0%
	% within TMV	.0%	14.0%	54.1%	30.0%
	% of Total	.0%	5.1%	24.9%	30.0%
Regular	Count	0	0	24	24
	Expected Count	4.3	8.7	11.0	24.0
	% within TAMV	.0%	.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% within TMV	.0%	.0%	22.0%	10.1%
	% of Total	.0%	.0%	10.1%	10.1%
Total	Count	42	86	109	237
	Expected Count	42.0	86.0	109.0	237.0
	% within TAMV	17.7%	36.3%	46.0%	100.0%
	% within TMV	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	17.7%	36.3%	46.0%	100.0%

Tab. 3. Cross-tabulation between type of archaeological museum visitor and type of museum visitor, amongst respondents living in the UK in the MoL sample. A chi-squared test [ $\chi^2 = 114.098$  with 4 df;  $P < 0.001$ ] was run to probe the statistical significance of the relationship between the two variables.

UK RESIDENTS IN THE MoL SAMPLE			
Type of archaeological television viewer		Frequency	Valid Percent
N = 236	Non viewer	42	18%
	Casual viewer	49	21%
	Repeat viewer	52	22%
	Regular viewer	93	39%
	Total	236	100%

Tab. 4. Frequency table showing the distribution of types of archaeological television viewers, amongst respondents living in the UK in the MoL sample.



UK RESIDENTS IN THE MoL SAMPLE			
Type of television viewer		Frequency	Valid Percent
N = 214	Light viewer	190	89%
	Average viewer	14	6%
	Heavy viewer	10	5%
	Total	214	100%

Tab. 5. Frequency table showing the distribution of types of television viewers, amongst respondents living in the UK in the MoL sample.

UK RESIDENTS IN THE TT SAMPLE				
		Gender		Total
Accessing archaeology by visiting museums or exhibitions (VAME)		Male	Female	
No	Count	23	13	36
	Expected Count	17.2	18.8	36.0
	% within VAME	63.9%	36.1%	100.0%
	% within Gender	19.2%	9.9%	14.3%
	% of Total	9.2%	5.2%	14.3%
Yes	Count	97	118	215
	Expected Count	102.8	112.2	215.0
	% within VAME	45.1%	54.9%	100.0%
	% within Gender	80.8%	90.1%	85.7%
	% of Total	38.6%	47.0%	85.7%
Total	Count	120	131	251
	Expected Count	120.0	131.0	251.0
	% within VAME	47.8%	52.2%	100.0%
	% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	47.8%	52.2%	100.0%

Tab. 6. Cross-tabulation between accessing archaeology through museum or exhibition visitation and gender, amongst people living in the UK in the TT sample. A chi-squared test [ $\chi^2 = 4.355$  with 1 df;  $P = 0.0371$ ] was run to probe the statistical significance of the relationship between the two variables.

the medium facilitating the experience. As showed in tables 6-7, UK residents who visit archaeological museums are mainly female, with higher levels of education (particularly a postgraduate qualification). In addition, the frequency with which the UK population visit archaeological museums tends to be higher for people with higher levels of education. Within the MoL sub-sample of UK residents, in fact, casual visitation of archaeolog-

UK RESIDENTS IN THE TT SAMPLE									
Accessing archaeology by visiting museums or exhibitions (VAME)		Education (Edu)						Total	
		Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Professional qualification or other diploma	University degree	University post-graduate diploma or degree		
<b>No</b>	Count	4	3	7	9	8	5	36	
	Expected Count	1.0	1.7	6.6	10.5	8.5	7.7	36.0	
	% within VAME	11.1%	8.3%	19.4%	25.0%	22.2%	13.9%	100.0%	
	% within Edu	57.1%	25.0%	15.2%	12.3%	13.6%	9.3%	14.3%	
	% of Total	1.6%	1.2%	2.8%	3.6%	3.2%	2.0%	14.3%	
<b>Yes</b>	Count	3	9	39	64	51	49	215	
	Expected Count	6.0	10.3	39.4	62.5	50.5	46.3	215.0	
	% within VAME	1.4%	4.2%	18.1%	29.8%	23.7%	22.8%	100.0%	
	% within Edu	42.9%	75.0%	84.8%	87.7%	86.4%	90.7%	85.7%	
	% of Total	1.2%	3.6%	15.5%	25.5%	20.3%	19.5%	85.7%	
<b>Total</b>	Count	7	12	46	73	59	54	251	
	Expected Count	7.0	12.0	46.0	73.0	59.0	54.0	251.0	
	% within VAME	2.8%	4.8%	18.3%	29.1%	23.5%	21.5%	100.0%	
	% within Edu	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Tab 7. Cross-tabulation between accessing archaeology through museum or exhibition visitation and education (highest qualification attained), amongst people living in the UK in the TT sample. A chi-squared test [ $\chi^2 = 12.982$  with 5 df;  $P = 0.024$ ] was run to probe the statistical significance of the relationship between the two variables.

ical museums is statistically more frequent amongst respondents with O level/GCSE, and regular visitation among university graduates or post-graduates (tab. 8). On the whole, these trends mirror those identified by Merriman (1991, p. 50) more than twenty years ago for heritage museum visitation in Britain.

Television programmes are, instead, a way of accessing archaeology for a wider social spectrum of the population. If looking at the MoL sample (to avoid any bias resulting from the specific make-up of the *TT* viewership), UK residents watching archaeological television are represented

UK RESIDENTS IN THE MoL SAMPLE						
		Education				
Type of archaeological museum visitor (TAMV)		O Level/GCSE	A Level	University degree	Post-graduate degree	Total
<b>Casual</b>	Count	32	30	45	30	137
	Expected Count	24.0	31.2	46.3	35.5	137.0
	% within TAMV	23.4%	21.9%	32.8%	21.9%	100.0%
	% Education	80.0%	57.7%	58.4%	50.8%	60.1%
	% of Total	14.0%	13.2%	19.7%	13.2%	60.1%
<b>Repeat</b>	Count	5	21	22	20	68
	Expected Count	11.9	15.5	23.0	17.6	68.0
	% within TAMV	7.4%	30.9%	32.4%	29.4%	100.0%
	% within Education	12.5%	40.4%	28.6%	33.9%	29.8%
	% of Total	2.2%	9.2%	9.6%	8.8%	29.8%
<b>Regular</b>	Count	3	1	10	9	23
	Expected Count	4.0	5.2	7.8	6.0	23.0
	% within TAMV	13.0%	4.3%	43.5%	39.1%	100.0%
	% within Education	7.5%	1.9%	13.0%	15.3%	10.1%
	% of Total	1.3%	.4%	4.4%	3.9%	10.1%
<b>Total</b>	Count	40	52	77	59	228
	Expected Count	40.0	52.0	77.0	59.0	228.0
	% within TAMV	17.5%	22.8%	33.8%	25.9%	100.0%
	% within Education	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	17.5%	22.8%	33.8%	25.9%	100.0%

Tab. 8. Cross-tabulation between type of archaeological museum visitor and education (highest qualification attained), amongst people living in the UK in the MoL sample. A chi-squared test [ $\chi^2 = 15.805$  with 6 df;  $P = 0.015$ ] was run to probe the statistical significance of the relationship between the two variables.

the most amongst people who have attained a university first degree or a postgraduate degree, but not too dissimilarly by those with qualifications up to O level/GCSE (tab. 9). This confirms a trend reported by Bennett (2006, p. 210) as regards the consumption of nature/history documentaries more widely, and which he uses to conclude that “distinction

UK RESIDENTS IN THE MoL SAMPLE				
		Accessing archaeology by watching archaeological TV programmes (ATP)		Total
Education		Yes	No	
O level/ GCSE	Count	32	10	42
	Expected Count	31.5	10.5	42.0
	% within Education	76.2%	23.8%	100.0%
	% within ATP	16.7%	15.6%	16.4%
	% of Total	12.5%	3.9%	16.4%
A level	Count	38	25	63
	Expected Count	47.3	15.8	63.0
	% within Education	60.3%	39.7%	100.0%
	% within ATP	19.8%	39.1%	24.6%
	% of Total	14.8%	9.8%	24.6%
University degree	Count	71	16	87
	Expected Count	65.3	21.8	87.0
	% within Education	81.6%	18.4%	100.0%
	% within ATP	37.0%	25.0%	34.0%
	% of Total	27.7%	6.3%	34.0%
Post-gradu- ate degree	Count	51	13	64
	Expected Count	48.0	16.0	64.0
	% within Education	79.7%	20.3%	100.0%
	% within ATP	26.6%	20.3%	25.0%
	% of Total	19.9%	5.1%	25.0%
Total	Count	192	64	256
	Expected Count	192.0	64.0	256.0
	% within Education	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
	% within ATP	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%

Tab. 9. Cross-tabulation between accessing archaeology through TV programmes and education (highest qualification attained), amongst people living in the UK in the MoL sample. A chi-squared test [ $\chi^2 = 10.052$  with 3 df;  $P = 0.018$ ] was run to probe the statistical significance of the relationship between the two variables.

on the [television] box is not ... sharply drawn". Since it appeals to both the segments with the lowest and highest levels of education, archaeological TV, more than other kinds of archaeological communication, performs the social function of fostering a sense of belonging to a common culture (Xu, Yan 2011). It can be a tool for social cohesion, through the promotion of a shared (across different socio-demographics) awareness of what archaeology is and has the potential to do for contemporary society, and of local and national history. As found by Piccini and Henson (2006) and confirmed through this study, however, a gap remains in the capability of archaeological television to engage younger audiences (here those aged between 18 and 35 years old) (tab. 10).

Tab. 10 (below and next page). Cross-tabulation between accessing archaeology through TV programmes and age, amongst people living in the UK in the MoL sample. A chi-squared test [ $\chi^2 = 13.030$  with 6 df;  $P = 0.043$ ] was run to probe the statistical significance of the relationship between the two variables.

UK RESIDENTS IN THE MoL SAMPLE				
		Watching archaeological TV programmes (ATP)		Total
Age		Yes	No	
<b>18-25</b>	Count	18	16	34
	Expected Count	25.8	8.2	34.0
	% within Age	52.9%	47.1%	100.0%
	% within ATP	9.1%	25.4%	13.0%
	% of Total	6.9%	6.1%	13.0%
<b>26-35</b>	Count	40	15	55
	Expected Count	41.7	13.3	55.0
	% within Age	72.7%	27.3%	100.0%
	% within ATP	20.2%	23.8%	21.1%
	% of Total	15.3%	5.7%	21.1%
<b>36-45</b>	Count	35	8	43
	Expected Count	32.6	10.4	43.0
	% within Age	81.4%	18.6%	100.0%
	% within ATP	17.7%	12.7%	16.5%
	% of Total	13.4%	3.1%	16.5%
<b>46-55</b>	Count	36	8	44
	Expected Count	33.4	10.6	44.0
	% within Age	81.8%	18.2%	100.0%
	% within ATP	18.2%	12.7%	16.9%
	% of Total	13.8%	3.1%	16.9%



<b>56-65</b>	Count	41	10	51
	Expected Count	38.7	12.3	51.0
	% within Age	80.4%	19.6%	100.0%
	% within ATP	20.7%	15.9%	19.5%
	% of Total	15.7%	3.8%	19.5%
<b>66-75</b>	Count	22	5	27
	Expected Count	20.5	6.5	27.0
	% within Age	81.5%	18.5%	100.0%
	% within ATP	11.1%	7.9%	10.3%
	% of Total	8.4%	1.9%	10.3%
<b>76+</b>	Count	6	1	7
	Expected Count	5.3	1.7	7.0
	% within Age	85.7%	14.3%	100.0%
	% within ATP	3.0%	1.6%	2.7%
	% of Total	2.3%	.4%	2.7%
<b>Total</b>	Count	198	63	261
	Expected Count	198.0	63.0	261.0
	% within Age	75.9%	24.1%	100.0%
	% within ATP	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	75.9%	24.1%	100.0%

## 6. Comparing museum and television experiences of archaeology

The previous section highlighted the importance of television in archaeological communication, particularly for the width and socio-demographic diversity of the public it allows us to engage in the UK. Beyond these indicators, however, the nature and quality of TV experiences of archaeology compared to museum ones remain to be established. For this reason, an analysis of the experiences facilitated by *Time Team* and by the medieval gallery of the Museum of London was undertaken. Respondents of the *TT* sample were asked to indicate the meanings of their experiences of watching the last episode of *Time Team* they had viewed. The MoL sample was questioned in the same way with regards to their experience of visiting the medieval gallery. Meanings were then grouped into experience types based on the revised version of Kotler and Kotler's model (1998, p. 139) (see tab. 1 and the *Methodology* section above). The breakdown of resulting experience types (fig. 3) shows that the spectrum of *Time Team* experiences was prevalently centred on learning and excitement, and that of MoL experiences on learning and playfulness. Importantly, in both cases people's experiences were strongly characterised by a learning

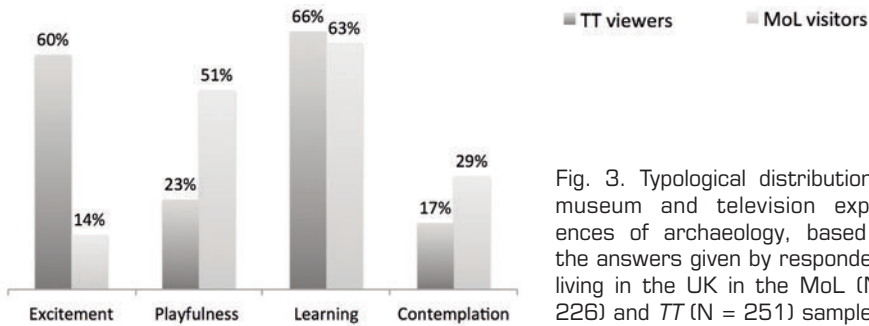


Fig. 3. Typological distribution of museum and television experiences of archaeology, based on the answers given by respondents living in the UK in the MoL (N = 226) and *TT* (N = 251) samples.

component, and this contributes to challenge the general claim that television series like *Time Team* are merely “entertainment archaeology” (Mower 2000, p. 3), a light form of cultural engagement with limited educational potential. The value of *Time Team* in facilitating learning was also further proved by an in depth analysis of respondents’ learning experience conducted using the *Generic Learning Outcomes* model. Whilst this analysis is reported in detail elsewhere (Bonacchi 2013, p. 125), it is here useful to restate two key findings: as a result of their experience of engaging with *TT*, 72% of respondents living in the UK in the *TT* sample showed evidence of the gaining or consolidation of knowledge and understanding, and a further 13% evidence of changed attitudes or values.

## 7. Conclusions

A number of conclusions can be drawn for future, sociologically-oriented research in Public Archaeology, and for the practice of archaeological communication. We have seen how certain trends of the UK public’s experience of archaeology appear to be substantially unchanged since Merriman’s study (1991). This outcome fundamentally invites us to reconsider the pace at which participation changes, and to take this into account for the development of policy and practice related to public engagement with archaeology and heritage more widely. While the uptake of new digital media is increasing, ‘older’ media still play a key role in allowing large and diverse parts of the UK population to interact with archaeological information, knowledge and resources. As already underlined elsewhere (Bonacchi 2012a), too often the invention of new technologies generates the illusion of a sudden and rapid ‘revolution’ in communication, which does not usually translate into reality. A related issue that this paper has evidenced is the extent to which participation practices vary depending on the geographic, cultural and policy contexts and

on the way in which archaeology is managed in a given country. The public's experience of archaeology in the UK, for example, is much more mediated than in Italy, where it is instead driven by a more direct contact with archaeological heritage, either on site or in museum spaces. This finding has particularly profound implications for heritage funding policy, especially (potentially) at supranational European level.

The article also generated insights into the public value of the television communication of archaeology compared to museum communication, in the UK. It proved that TV can be more socio-demographically inclusive than museums, and facilitate rich types of archaeological experiences and engagement with learning, beyond the criticism that has been directed towards the representation of the past on TV in the "entertainment age" (Turner 2010). Finally, the wide-spread use of online platforms in the UK encourages archaeologists to increasingly leverage on digital technologies to initiate audio-visual communications without the mediation of traditional broadcasting partners and their often primarily commercial interests. Nevertheless, seeking to maintain a regular presence in TV schedules continues to be key for archaeology, as the role of traditional broadcasting within the overall media landscape is likely to remain central for the near future (Bonacchi *et al.* 2012).

On a different ground, the paper has underlined the need for larger, national scale research on the social structure and individual behaviour of participation in archaeology, to further probe and detail the general and indicative trends emerged in this research as well as to provide information on that group of the UK population who do not engage with archaeology at all and on younger members of the public (aged below 18 years old). Work of this type would also allow more direct comparisons with those studies that examine cultural taste and engagement practice in fields other than archaeology. More generally, if Public Archaeology is to survive in a research arena where museum and cultural heritage studies already succeed, then it should find the courage to exit the comfort zone of studying primarily the representation of archaeology in the media and its history. It should try to understand the public for archaeology today, and critically reflect on the implications of their attitudes and behaviour for archaeology as a scientific discipline, as a professional practice and heritage resources.

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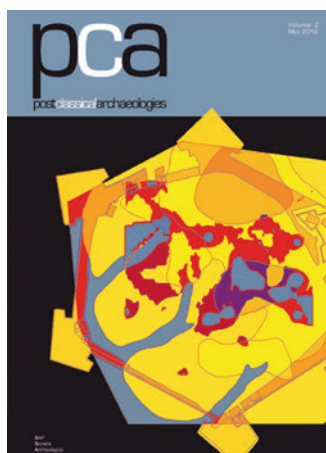


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